



Weekly Safety Meeting

Respiratory Protective Equipment Cleaning Procedures (Mandatory)

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Standard 1910.134 Appendix B-2, respiratory cleaning procedures are mandatory. These procedures are provided for your employer to use when cleaning respirators. These procedures are general in nature, and your employer, as an alternative, may use the cleaning recommendations provided by the manufacturer of any respirators that are in use by your fellow workers if, of course, such procedures are as effective, as those listed in the OSHA Appendix B-2.

When referring to equivalent effectiveness, this simply means that the procedures your organization uses must accomplish the same objectives that are expressed in the Appendix B-2, for example, such procedures must ensure that the respirator is properly cleaned and disinfected in a manner that prevents damage to the respirator and does not cause harm to the user.

Procedures for Cleaning Respirators

How should you prepare your respirator for cleaning? This procedure requires a little extra effort. Follow these steps to ensure your respirator will be sanitary for your health:

- Remove filters, cartridges, or canisters.
- Disassemble facepieces by removing speaking diaphragms, demand and pressure-demand valves assemblies, hoses, or any components recommended by your respiratory protection manufacturer.
- Discard or repair any defective parts.
- Wash respirator components in warm water at a temperature of (43 degrees Celsius or 110 degrees Fahrenheit, maximum), with a mild detergent or with a cleaner recommended by your respirator manufacturer. A stiff bristle (not wire) brush may be used to facilitate the removal of dirt.
- Rinse respirator components thoroughly in clean, warm, preferably running water at a temperature of (43 degrees Celsius or 110 degrees Fahrenheit, maximum). Drain the respirator.

When the cleaner selection does not contain a disinfecting agent, the respirator components should be immersed for two minutes in one of the following solutions:

1. Hypochlorite solution (50 ppm of chlorine) made by adding approximately one milliliter of laundry bleach to one liter of water at the temperature of (43 degrees Celsius or 110 degrees Fahrenheit, maximum); or,
2. Aqueous solution of iodine (50 ppm iodine) made by adding approximately 0.8 milliliters of tincture of iodine (608 grams ammonium and/or potassium iodide/100 cc of 45% alcohol) to one liter of water at (43 degrees Celsius or 110 degrees Fahrenheit, maximum); or,
3. Other commercially available cleansers of equivalent disinfectant quality when used as directed if their use is recommended or approved by the respirator manufacturer.

Rinse your respirator components thoroughly in clean, warm (43 degrees Celsius or 110 degrees Fahrenheit, maximum), preferably running water. Drain respirator. The importance of thorough rinsing cannot be overemphasized. Detergents or disinfectants that dry on facepieces may result in dermatitis. In addition, some disinfectants may cause deterioration of rubber or corrosion of metal parts if not completely removed.

Your respirator components should be hand-dried with a clean lint-free cloth or air-dried in a clean air environment (free of airborne contaminants).

You should reassemble your facepiece, replacing filters, cartridges, and canisters where necessary.

Finally, you should test your respirator to ensure that all components work properly. If you find problems with your respirator, you should contact your supervisor or Respiratory Protection Administrator for your organization as soon as possible.

REMEMBER: Respiratory protection devices are the last line of defense. Respiratory Protective Equipment is very important and must function properly when YOU must use them.

Summary:

We must take respiratory protection equipment seriously. Improper care, maintenance, and storage could lead to failure of equipment or worse, personal injury or death.

Remember, the care of this equipment affects the wearer.

RESPIRATOR CLEANING IS MANDATORY!

